

# Employee Participation and Organizational Identification: Implications of the Mediating Effect of Organizational Culture

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification in Nigerian manufacturing organizations and also examined the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship. The cross-sectional survey design was adopted and data was drawn from 191 employees of selected manufacturing companies. The findings revealed that employee participation through practices such as quality circles and joint consultation committees significantly correlates with organizational identification. Also organizational culture is revealed to partially yet significantly mediate between employee participation and organizational identification. The findings are thereafter discussed and conclusions made.

**Keywords:** Employee participation, Organizational identification, Quality circles, Joint consultation committees, Organizational culture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A major challenge of businesses and companies which pervades national, cultural and organizational borders is the issue of getting the worker to identify with the organization as a means to achieving better performance, unity, cohesion, sincere support, loyalty and trust at the workplace (Cheney, 1983; Tompkins, 2005). Mael and Ashforth (1992) defined Organizational Identification as “the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization, where the individual defines himself or herself in terms of the organization which he or she is a member.”(p.104) this is as various studies argue that the identification of the worker with the organization positively impacts on performance, productivity and behaviour; for as opined; with identification comes the acceptance of roles, responsibility, organizational decisional outcomes and the determination to improve on previous efforts (Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Donthu & Kennett, 2000; Donovan & Hocutt, 2001; Jaja, 2003). One might argue about the relevance of such a study given the prevalence of literature and research on organizational commitment, a construct which some argue is synonymous to organizational identification (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000) but as noted by Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006), organizational identification is a mental, psychological and perceptual construct reflecting self-reference, while commitment reflects an attitude or behaviour toward the organization and its members. Also, organizational identification is self-definitional and entails a cognitive and psychological oneness with the organization; commitment implies a relationship in which both individual and organization are separate entities.

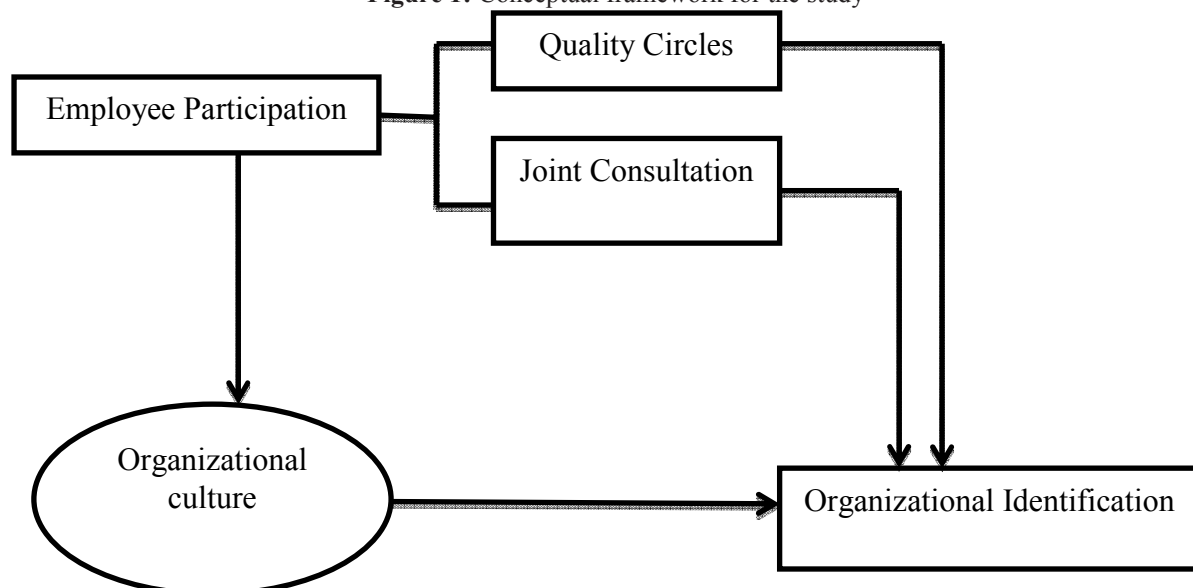
Much study and research carried out on organizational identification these past thirty years is made obvious by the extant of literature on the topic. For example Bartels (2006) studied organizational identification and communication. The study examined the links between the employee’s evaluation of organizational communication and their identification with the organization; emphasizing the needs of individual employees as instruments in the management of their identification with the organization. Riketta (2005), based on his meta-analysis study of the overlap between organizational identification and affective organizational commitment across 96 independent samples, also argued that a major distinction between affective organizational commitment and organizational identification was the extent to which they related to various organizational outcomes. By identifying with the organization, the worker does not view the organization as a “tool” or “vehicle” for conveyance onto individual and personal goals but the worker is “united” with the organization and sees it as a family, partnership or structure of which he or she is an important ingredient, hence, the organization is no longer perceived as selfish and serving only its own interest but it is perceived to serve everyone’s interest. Other studies include Lee’s (2004) empirical analysis of organizational identification, Kramer’s (1993) study on the relationship between Cooperation and organizational identification, and Pratt’s (1998) study on the importance and need for organizational identification within the organization. Most of these studies dealt with the nature and conceptualization of organizational identification as a single construct, seeking to understand and

empirically explain its dimensions and its operationalization (Mael & Ashforth, 1989; Dutton et al.1994; Riketta, 2005; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Miller et al., 2000).

Despite these, very little research has been carried out as regards the psychological process entailed in the contributing worker or the effect of participation on employee behaviour especially as concerns organizational identification. This is evident from the dearth of existent literature on the topic. Furthermore, little has been done as regards the possible mediating influence of organizational culture on the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification; this is evident from the paucity of studies in the area. This research work, as a point of departure from previous studies, examines the effect of employee participation in the enhancement of organizational identification within the context of organizational culture as a mediating variable.

We contribute by empirically illustrating the implications of culture-contextual conditions and their intervening or mediating effect on the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification in Nigerian manufacturing companies. We draw on two major theoretical baselines in assessing the intersections and relationships between the study variables, namely – the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Miller, Allen, Casey & Johnson, 2000; Haslam, 2001); the study variables are herewith reviewed within these theoretical frameworks with relative implications identified and discussed.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework for the study



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Employee Participation

Employee participation is the process whereby members of an organization are empowered to part-take in solving problems and making decisions appropriate to their level in the organization (Boon, Arumugam, Safa & Bakar, 2007). It is a way of bringing the employee “into the fold” by allowing him or her share in the various organizational processes. Participation occurs when those at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy are involved and contribute to the “intentions” of the organization, which according to Hyman and Mason (1995), concerns the various initiatives which promote the representational rights of employees to be involved in such organizational decision-making. Grazier (1989) described employee participation as a way of engaging employees at all levels in the thinking process of an organization. It is the recognition that many decisions made in an organization can be made better by soliciting the input of those who may be affected by the decision. Basically, it entails an understanding that people at all levels of an organization possess unique talents, skills and creativity that can be of significant value if allowed to be expressed. Shadur, Kienzle & Rodwell (1999) argued that if employees in the organization are adequately and well informed about issues concerning them and are granted the opportunity to be involved and to make contributions towards solving work-related problems and the decision-making process relevant to their work, there will be benefits for both the organization and the individual. Li, Tse & Gu (2006) argued that it was important to include the frontline employees in the decision making process, those whom he observed were closest to the customers and had fore knowledge of their needs and expectations. This would further enhance productivity and also facilitate the entrepreneurial process. According to Poutsma (2001), four major reasons for adopting employee participation include power-sharing, organizational efficiency, its humanistic approach and the redistribution of outcomes, thus affirming that where

participatory management operates, workers work harder if they share in the decisions that affect them. Workers who, at the risk of their life and health, spend time and effort in the production of goods and services have an entitlement as regards contributing to the decisions that frame such an organization upon which also their livelihood depends (Ajayi & Owoeye, 2005).

Noah (2008) traced the increasing interest in employee participation to several factors. First is the anticipated political pressure designed to extend the popular democratic dispensation in the larger society to the economic sphere, secondly, the growth of the pressure on the collective bargaining system as a result of difficulties associated with negotiating in the context of high inflation and the increasing disenchantment with the dialogue of confrontation and lastly, the problem of denying powerful groups a means of exercising their rights, however, Hirszowics (1981) in her observation was more concerned with the possibility of such a shift towards the restructuring of work situations faced by individual workers in terms of the values of self-expression, self-respect and control over the social environment, with the growing acceptance of the legitimacy of claims for participation in a world of private property, based on pragmatic arguments (effectiveness and efficiency) and on the ideological values of egalitarianism, which portrays the rising social status of the working man, but as Hewitt (2002) argued, with the growing inadequacies of the “command and control model” the importance of a collaborative framework cannot be overemphasized. Such a framework would harness the skills and talents of the employees, thus positively impacting vital decisions that affect them at all levels. Other advantages of participation include; the promotion of trust and a sense of relevance resulting from a perceived sense of control on the part of the employee, enhanced productivity and efficiency through an increase in job satisfaction and morale, employee acceptance of decisions and their outcomes through a sense of ownership (Chang & Lorenzi, 1983; Sashkin, 1976).

## **2.2 Organizational Identification**

Organizational Identification is defined as the merging of the workers interests, goals and objectives with that of the organization. This occurs when the worker sees himself or herself as one and in agreement with the organization, willingly accepting the organizations decisional outcomes and offering support for organizational pursuits and objectives (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Johnson et al., 1999; Chow & Chan, 2008; Hsu & Lin, 2008). By identifying with the organization, the worker becomes “part and parcel” of the organization and tends to choose activities that mirror that of the organization. O’Reilly and Chatman (1986) argued that a unique feature of Organizational Identification was that it expressed the worker’s psychological attachment, attraction towards the organization and desire to maintain an emotionally satisfying and self-defining relationship with the organization. Blau (1964) described identification as a social exchange relationship between two groups or parties, distinct from those of the financial or economic exchange due to mutual exchanges producing reciprocity of behaviour and obligations by both parties.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) specified three intra-psychological group-processes which serve as a basis in the consideration of these group-based interactions, namely: social categorization, social comparison and social identification. Social categorization recognizes the categorization of individuals into classes or groups from which information about collective properties and attributes concerning various circumstances are drawn. Social comparison is the definition of such groups as a result of their distinct qualities which separate them from similar groups, while social identification is the process whereby units or members of a group are defined by the group’s characteristics adopting such in self-descriptive ways, a perspective shared by Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) in their study of organizational identification. They defined organizational identification as the degree to which a member defines himself or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization. Strong organizational identification occurs when, (1) one’s organizational identification is more salient than alternative identities, and (2) his or her self-concept has many of the same characteristics he or she believes define the organization as a social group.

Tompkins and Cheney (1985) however, noted instances where identification with a particular group, unit or department over the larger organization could be detrimental and of serious consequences to the well-being of the entire organization especially in cases involving departmental objectives, values and policies, which as observed by Grice, Paulsen, & Jones (2002) implied the possibility of conflicting objectives between departments or groups as what may be prototypical behaviour for one may be counter-normative for the other. Notwithstanding, various targets of identification are likely to be compatible when the core values associated with each are similar. This can be achieved when self-categorization in terms of one group or unit, does not exclude such a categorization of self in terms of the other group or unit (Grice et al., 2002; Gallois, Tluchowska, & Callan, 2001).

With the workers expression of stronger levels of organizational identification, higher degrees of job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour and trust can be observed. For as Hogs and Abrams (1988) argued, members of an organization become psychologically intertwined with and attached to their organizations when they imbibe the characteristics attributable to the organization into their self-concept, thereby describing

and evaluating organizational values and objectives with reference to self. This, according to Mael and Ashforth (1989) entails accepting and being in agreement with the organizations decisions, goals and values, therefore experiencing at a personal level the organizations achievements as well as failure. Going further, it is expressed through defensive behavioural tendencies concerning organizational actions and outcomes, a psychological and cognitive process which may not be associated with specific behaviours or emotional states. This is further demonstrated by Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) through structural equation modeling, that the core and primary component of organizational identification is first in terms of cognition as regards social-categorization; the other two components, social comparison and social identification are secondary in nature. A distinction from commitment which might be as a result of that particular organization serving as a vehicle for one's own career goals, leaving open the option and possibility of switching to another organization which best serves the worker or individuals goals and needs. Organizational identification, on the other hand, means the worker cannot leave without some form of "psychic loss." Although, Ellemers, Spears & Doosje (1999) assert that it is the affective component of identification, such as emotional involvement and attachment, which is the main ingredient of in-group favoritism.

### **2.3 Employee Participation and Organizational identification**

Fuller, Hester, Barnett, Frey, Relyea & Beu (2006) argue that when employees are allowed participation in various decision making process; it increases their sense of perceived respect and prestige within the organization, which also leads to organizational identification. This is further supported by Allen, Shore & Griffeth (2003) who observed that through participation, the employee identified with the organization as a result of perceived inclusion and contribution to the decision making process. Although Patchen (1970) did not define identification, but he did emphasize on the importance and role of the employee's shared values, goals and characteristics with that of the organization in achieving workers solidarity, belongingness and support for the organization. This he argued can be obtained through employee participation and collective contribution to the organizational process, for as Pendleton, Wilson & Wright (1998) opined, when the level of ownership is sufficient to produce 'feelings of ownership', higher levels of identification and satisfaction are observable.

Brown (1969) opined that organizational identification was the function of five integral factors which are:

- i. Opportunity for achievement within the organization
- ii. Membership in social structures such as groups, executive councils, boards and committees.
- iii. Possibility for promotion, growth and development
- iv. Participation within the organization through various channels which grant the employee a sense of worth, prestige and relevance within the organizational framework.
- v. Cohesiveness with the organization

Smidts, Pruyn & Riel (2001) in their study, observed the imperative contribution of the flow of communication in achieving cohesion and identification through three major dimensions namely: openness, participation and supportiveness. For according to them, the perceived flow of information, determined to a great extent the level of involvement and subsequently, the communication climate (Obiora & Kpakol, 2015). This corroborates with Bartels (2006) study of identification and the role of employee perceived participation through access to information, especially the sort that relates to their workplace and functions.

Drawing from the above argument, it is therefore our opinion that Employee Participation is a necessary ingredient in the actualization of organizational Identification. Participation through quality contribution to the decision making process; especially in areas that concern the worker, participation through the employees access to relevant and timely information, participation through various organizational activities which translate into physical outcomes such as workplace structures and conditions, and finally participation through consultative meetings aimed at creating awareness and involving those at the "bottom of the hierarchy" in the intentions of those at the "of the hierarchy" (Salamon, 2000; Pendleton, 1998; Smidts et al., 2001; Dutton et al., 1994). Based on the above argument, the following hypothetical statement is postulated

#### **2.3.1 Quality circles and organizational identification**

Salamon (2000) viewed the quality circle as permanent discussion groups with limited membership stemming from a particular sector and with origins from the lower organizational hierarchy, who meet on a consistent, interval and regular basis either during official hours or free-time to discuss problems related to their workplace, work environment and conditions, and under the guide of a supervisor or moderator. The aim of the quality circle is to make recommendations for solutions to management, based on the expertise and experience of its members and also to initiate and control methods of application for these recommendations either independently or through official channels. As a volunteer group, the quality circle is composed of members who meet to talk about workplace and service improvements and make presentations to their management about ideas.

The quality circle is a means through which management taps into the expertise of the employee in areas which the worker is believed to be experienced and thus effective. This process further fosters friendly relations between management and employee as this promotes recognition and value for employee contributions,



two factors which increases employee perceived respect and prestige, thus facilitating organizational identification (Salamon, 2000; Smidts et al., 2001); hence we therefore hypothesize that:

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between quality circles and organizational identification

### **2.3.2 Joint consultation committees and organizational identification**

Salamon (2000) described the joint consultation committees as a form of joint regulation in which workers and managers representatives from all sections of the organization, meet regularly and at intervals to discuss matters such as staff welfare, factory safety, job grading, worker holiday, productivity and other employment issues. The process entails employee participation through representation in matters which concern operational work problems, work conditions and work environment. The process of engaging workers in consultative committees with a view to sampling their opinions and informing them about planned actions further creates an environment of trust and co-operation which brings about a “feeling of shared ownership” in the employee. This would also increase the tendency of workers to identify with the organization since they too were inclusively informed and possibly contributed to the planning and decision making process (Salamon, 2000; Allen et al., 2003); hence we therefore hypothesize that:

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between joint consultation committees and organizational identification

## **2.4 The Mediating Role of Organizational Culture**

According to Kenny and Baron (1986), mediation occurs when the supposed relationship between two variables; the predictor and the criterion, is as a result of the intervention and influence of a third variable, which is the mediator. They described the mediator as the generative mechanism through which the focal independent variable is able to influence the dependent variable. This study examines the contextual role of organizational culture as a mediator in the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification for as Hofstede (2001) asserts, one cannot write meaningfully about employee participation in decision making without embedding it within a cultural context. Brown (1998) argued that the recent interest in the study of organizational culture arises from four major sources, namely: the research climate, human resource management, national cultures and from conviction approaches which emphasize the rational and structural nature of the organization to be able to offer a full explanation of organizational behaviour. While Ojo (2012) in his description opined that organizational culture; though not tangible, is manifested at the workplace through its effects on work processes, workplace relationships and working conditions.

Schein (1985) defined culture as “a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (p.9) while Hofstede (1998) described culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one organization from another” (p.478). Ojo (2012) however, in his opinion, noted that culture has no generally accepted definition but he also observed that various scholars agree to the effect and influence of organizational culture on employee behaviour, organizational productivity level, performance and ethical behaviour. Denison (1990) classified organizational culture into four fundamental views, namely:

- i. The consistent organizational culture which embodies the idea of improved internal cohesion, co-ordination and organizational identification through members shared beliefs, values, and goals.
- ii. The mission culture which views member’s solidarity through shared beliefs, sense of purpose, values and direction as a cohesive tool in the pursuit of collective goals.
- iii. The involvement/participation culture which views involvement and participation as paths to achieving a shared sense of responsibility and ownership, thus enhancing positive workers behaviour, support and loyalty.
- iv. The adaptability culture which utilizes norms and beliefs as instruments in receiving, interpreting and translating signals from the environment into internal organizational and behavioural changes which will enable the organization to adjust to its environment, survive, grow and also develop.

The culture of an organization encompasses all the life experiences each worker brings to the organization. Culture is mainly influenced by the organization’s leaders and management staff because of their role in decision-making, organizational structuring and strategic direction. According to Donovan (2006) Organizational culture is represented in a group such as language, decision making, symbols, legends, and daily work practices. Hofstede (2001) proposed two cultural dimensions namely: power distance and individualism-collectivism. Power distance indicates perception of individuals regarding power differentials within the society or organization (Menzel, Krauss, Ulijn, & Weggerman, 2006).

Organizational culture determines the level to which participation is encouraged and practiced. In a high power distance culture, decision-making is viewed as a privilege of management, and participation is considered as an infringement to management prerogative. Hence, workers do not participate in the decision-making process. In contrast, in low power distance culture, everyone is perceived as a potential contributor to the problem-

solving and decision-making process. Therefore, workers consider it their right to participate and be involved in work-related issues and decisions that concern them. Meanwhile, individualism collectivism basically identifies the person or group involved in making decisions. The individualism-collectivism continuum is the extent to which an individual defines himself as either an independent agent or a part of the collective group (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). Based on the above argument, the following hypothetical statement is postulated:

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** The culture of the organization does not significantly mediate the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification

### 3. METHODOLOGY

**Design:** This study which is quasi-experimental, adopts the cross-sectional survey design which entails the collection of standardized information from representative samples selected from a specified group, class, gender, nationality or individuals with certain characteristics which make up an entire population. This choice of design is influenced by the nature and purpose of our study, type of investigation, study setting, units of analysis and the time horizon concerned. The study adopts a correlational investigation intended to examine the relationship between the study variables, the study setting is non-contrived with analysis carried out at the micro level and the unit of analysis based on the individual, specifically the worker within the target organizations. This is so because organizational identification is an individual level construct (Eketu, 2009; Sullivan, 2001).

**Population and sample:** The population for this study comprises of 422 middle and junior level employees in seven selected manufacturing companies in Rivers State, drawn from the directory of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Rivers/Bayelsa state chapter. The selected organizations each represent one of the following manufacturing sectorial groups (i) food, beverages and drinks (ii) Wood and furniture products (iii) Domestic and industrial plastic (iv) Aluminium, Iron, Steel and fabrication (v) Carpet, Leather and Footwear (vi) Electrical and electronics, and finally (vii) Chemical and Pharmaceutical. A sample size of 205 is thus selected and respondents sampled using the proportionate stratified random technique with each organization forming a stratum (Sekaran, 2003; Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

**Instrumentation:** The primary data collection instrument for the study is the structured questionnaire. The predictor variable – employee participation – is operationalized using two dimensions (quality circles and joint consultation committees) with each dimension measured using 7 empirical referents each scaled on a five-point Likert scale ranked from 1-strongly disagree... to, 5-strongly agree, with 3-undecided as the mid-point (Salamon, 2000; Allen et al., 2003). The criterion variable – organizational identification is measured using 21 empirical referents each scaled on a five-point Likert scale ranked from 1-strongly disagree... to, 5-strongly agree, with 3-undecided as the mid-point (Mael & Ashforth, 1989; Johnson et al., 1999; Chow & Chan, 2008), while the assumed mediator – organizational culture, is measured using 12 empirical referents all scaled on a five-point Likert scale ranked from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree with 3-undecided as the midpoint (Denison, 1990; Donovan, 2006).

**Reliability:** The Cronbach alpha reliability test was utilized in the examination of the reliability of the instrument; the results for the variables are given as – employee participation (quality circles: 0.958; Joint consultation committees: 0.972); organizational identification: 0.985; and organizational culture: 0.939.

### 4. RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

A total number of 205 (100%) questionnaire copies were distributed and self-administered to the target respondents, out of which 199 (97%) of the total number was successfully retrieved; this was as a result of the time frame for the study as well as the busy schedule of some target respondents. Out of the 199 copies returned, copies were cleaned for missing values, double entries on an indicator, and blank sections, leaving 191 (93%) copies as valid for inclusion in the analysis.

#### 4.1 Sample Description

**Gender:** Out of a total of 191 respondents who participated in the study, 157 (82%) of them are male while 34 (18%) are female. This data corroborates that of Asawo (2009) which also portrayed the female respondents in minority when compared to their male counterparts in the manufacturing industry. This, as noted by Asawo (2009) could be as a result of the labour intensive nature of the industry which requires, in most cases, the manual and physical exertion of energy in largely regulated and mechanical work settings.

**Age:** Most of the respondents, as depicted in table 4.2, fall within the age bracket of 31 – 35 years, accounting for 82 (43%) of the total number of respondents. This is closely followed by the 26 – 30 years age bracket which accounts for 78 (41%) of the respondents. The next bracket is that of 36 – 40 years, which makes up for 22 (12%) of the respondents, then the less than 25 years of age bracket, with 7 (4%) of the respondents and lastly the 41 years and above age bracket with just 2 (1%) respondents. The frequencies follow a trend most common in Nigerian Manufacturing companies, where most staff and workmen are mostly regarded effective between the ages 26 – 35 years of age. It is at this age the worker is regarded as being most productive, especially when it

concerns jobs requiring manual and physical input as is obtainable in most Nigerian Manufacturing companies.

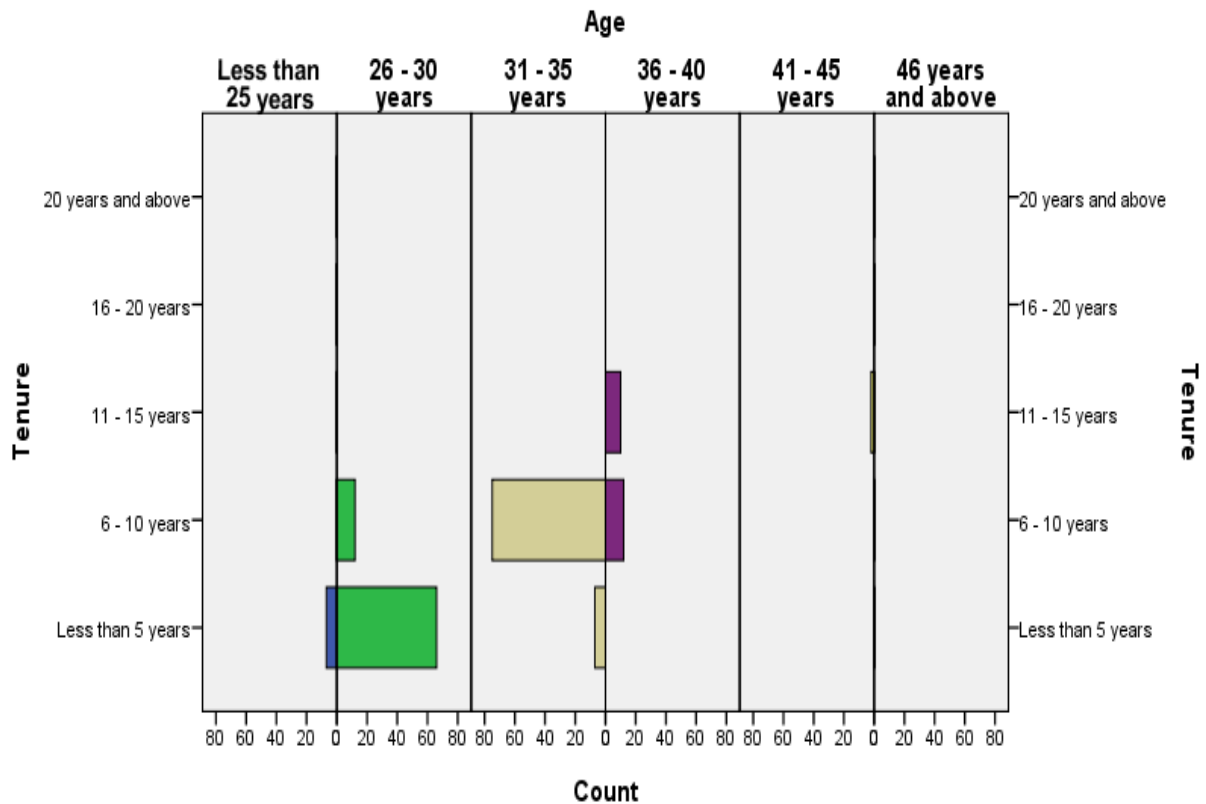
**Tenure:** Most of the respondents have worked for their companies between 6 – 10 years, this makes up for 99 (52%) of the total number of respondents, 80 (42%) have served their companies for less than 5 years, while 12 (6%) have served their companies between 11 – 15 years. It is important to also note the possible role the age of the company, unemployment rate, wages and incentives, family and cost of relocation, would play when assessing the employees tenure with the organization as these would go a long way in affecting workers decisions of leaving or continuing with the organization.

**Figure 2:** Population pyramid for gender and tenure with organization



**Respondents' gender and tenure with the organization:** Figure 2 shows that both gender categories have served the organization from the less than 25 years tenure bracket, to the 11 – 15 years tenure bracket. Although the female gender indicates a steady response rate between the less than 25 years and the 26 – 30 years bracket, there is a sharp reduction at the 11 – 15 years tenure bracket, and with no further response for the categories that follow. The male gender follows a similar rate of response, with a rise at the 26 – 30 years tenure bracket then a decline as well at the 11 – 15 years tenure bracket. None of the respondents have been with their respective organizations for more than 15 years as revealed by the data.

**Figure 3:** Population pyramid for age and tenure with organization



**Respondents Age and Tenure with the Organization:** The figure 3 reveals that a higher percentage of the manufacturing workforce fall within age brackets 26 – 30 years; and 31 – 35 years and have worked with their respective organizations between less than 5 years and 6 – 10 years. The data is an indication of a predominance of younger workers in their late twenties and early thirties in the industry, this further corroborates the possibility of age as a possible determining factor for employment or continuity within the industry which as earlier observed appears to rely heavily on manual and physical exertion.

#### 4.2 Hypotheses Testing

**Table 1:** Bivariate hypotheses testing

	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
<b>Organizational Identification</b>	3.21	1.28	1.000			
<b>Quality Circles</b>	2.24	1.23	.365**	1.000		
<b>Joint consultation committees</b>	2.37	1.34	.406**	.721**	1.000	
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	3.02	1.12	.857**	.348**	.316**	1.000

Where (\*\*) indicates significance at a 0.01 level and (\*) indicates significance at a 0.05 level. Source: Research data, 2015

**Results of descriptive:** As a result of the scale adopted for the study (five-point Likert); a mean score of  $X > 2.0$  where  $SD < 2.0$  is adopted as an indication of sufficient agreement levels as pertains to central tendencies whereas a mean score of  $X < 2.0$  where  $SD < 2.0$  is adopted as sufficient disagreement levels as regards central tendencies.

Table 1 illustrates the three operational variables of the study - Organizational identification (the criterion variable); Quality circles and Joint consultation committees (dimensions of the latent and predictor variable, employee participation). The criterion variable, organizational identification, carries a substantial mean score of  $X = 3.21$  and a low standard deviation of  $SD = 1.28$ . This shows that respondents (as drawn from the 12 empirical referents) agree to a considerable degree that they identify with their respective organizations through unity of purpose, as well as shared values and that they view their organizations as preferable and more suited to them when compared to other organizations, possibly within the same industry. The respondents also show a sense of pride in their work and would rise in defence of their organization whenever the need arises.



Quality circles, carries a moderate mean score of  $X = 2.24$  and standard deviation of  $SD = 1.23$ ; implying that the respondents barely agree to the existence of quality circles within their companies, and believe to some extent that management recognizes their efforts and the extent to which they believe their suggestions are being taken seriously. Therefore respondents in this study see the existence and functionality of quality circles as being barely sufficient within the Nigerian manufacturing industry. The second dimension, joint consultation committees carries a mean value of  $x = 2.37$  and a standard deviation of  $SD = 1.34$ ; the implications are that the presence, relevance and functionality of a Joint consultation committees within the organizations of respondents is at a moderate level. This means that respondents view the power of such committees and their contributions to the organizational issues bothering on employee welfare and decisional outcomes as also moderate and considerably sufficient.

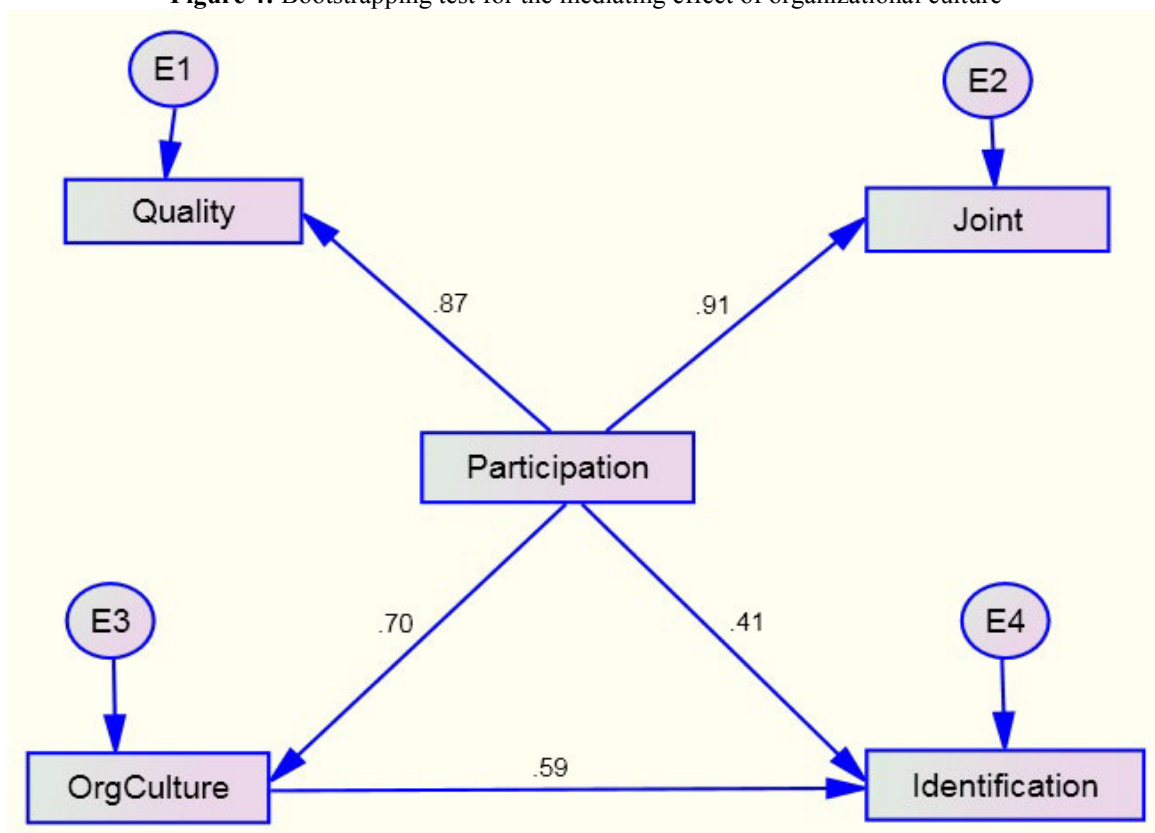
Table 1 shows that for organizational Culture, respondents believe to a moderate degree that they are kept informed and carried along through various organizational policies and managerial actions. This is presented by a moderate mean score of  $X = 3.02$ ; and a standard deviation of  $SD = 1.12$ . This goes further to illustrate (based on the empirical referents) that most respondents affirm that their organizations are culturally consistent, mission oriented, allow for participation and employee involvement; especially in matters that concern them and are culturally adaptive to various changes.

### Results of Hypotheses

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Table 1 reveals that the relationship between quality circles and organizational identification is significant given the correlation coefficient of .365 with significance at a 0.01 level and a  $P < 0.05$  value; hence the null hypothesis of no relationship is hereby rejected as the results indicate that there is a significant relationship between quality circles and the organizational identification of workers in the Nigerian manufacturing industry

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** Table 1 reveals that the relationship between joint consultation committees and organizational identification is significant given the correlation coefficient of .721 with significance at a 0.01 level and a  $P < 0.05$  value; hence the null hypothesis of no relationship is hereby rejected as the results indicate that there is a significant relationship between joint consultation committees and the organizational identification of workers in the Nigerian manufacturing industry.

**Figure 4:** Bootstrapping test for the mediating effect of organizational culture



Where quality = Quality circles; Joint = Joint consultation committees; Participation = Employee participation; OrgCulture = Organizational culture; Identification = Organizational identification.

**Table 2:** Test for mediating effect of organizational culture

Effects	Estimates	Significance
<b>Direct Effect</b>		
Employee Participation → Organizational Identification	0.41	P < 0.05
Employee Participation → Organizational culture	0.70	P < 0.05
Organizational Culture → Organizational Identification	0.59	P < 0.05
<b>Indirect Effect</b>		
Employee Participation → Organizational Culture → Organizational Identification	0.41	P < 0.05
<b>Total Effect</b>		
Employee Participation → Organizational Identification	0.823	P < 0.05

Source: Research data, 2015

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** Figure 4 and table 2 illustrate the output for the bootstrapping test for the mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification. Where the indirect effect ( $\beta_{21} * \beta_{Y2.1} = 0.41$ ) is equal to the direct effect ( $\beta_{Y1.2} = 0.41$ ). The study reveals that organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification. Hence we reject the null relationship of no significant mediation as the analysis reveals that organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification.

## 5. Discussion

From the analysis, we discover that employee participation does correlate with organizational identification and this relationship is partially mediated by the contextual variable, organizational culture. This follows the argument for the adoption of cultural practices and policies which recognize employees and workers within the organization. As members of the organization, employees are affected by the outcomes and consequences of various managerial decisions especially as it affects their roles and jobs. By informing and involving the employee in the decision making process, either through representative or direct methods, employees come to identify with the organization, find satisfaction in their work and feel a sense of relevance and oneness with the organization (Ashforth et. al 2008; Bartels, 2006; Okpu & Kpakol, 2015). Although; as revealed; employee participative schemes are existent and functional, they can still be improved upon. Especially in the area of the consistency and transparency of these functions, a lot more can be done to convince the worker of the authenticity of these functions and of the genuine intentions of management in setting up such functions.

The findings of the study corroborates the findings of previous studies in the area of employee participation with emphasis on the role of quality circles and joint consultative committees as effective mechanisms for significantly enhancing workers attitudes and trust in the organization (Haslam, 2001; King, 2007). As empirical referents of the predictor variable, these variables positively affect the outcome of organizational identification and produce a sense of oneness, belongingness and loyalty. The implication of this is that various forms of alienation and detachment only express the poor functionality of these participative mechanisms.

The study also illustrates the role of organizational culture as a partial mediator and how it significantly affects the relationship between employee participation and organizational identification. This implies that an integration of the various employee participative measures into the cultural framework of the organization would thus establish them as “abiding statutes” and thereafter forming the core values of the organization which can serve as reference points (Dukerich et al. 2002, Jaja, 2003; Hofstede, 2001). As a conduit for the transfer of transfer of the effect of employee participation unto organizational identification; organizational culture is demonstrated as a necessity in promoting activities that emphasize on employee participation within the workplace thus portraying the organization as “employee concerned” and facilitating organizational identification.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that employee participation enhances a sense of unity, affinity and togetherness. When employees are involved in a process, they would come to view such a process as theirs, therefore ensuring the success or achievement of that goal. When values are shared, and membership mechanisms are put in place, the worker will feel responsible for outcomes and this will encourage productivity and initiative. For as observed by Amah (2009); people act as a result of internalized values and not from external or forced control. This will enable management to focus on more important matters such as planning as most of the workers can be trusted with less supervision, hence we conclude that:

- i. That employee participative schemes and programs are existent in manufacturing companies in Nigeria but still need to be encouraged and improved upon.

- ii. That workers are more inclined to identify with organizations perceived as having their interest at heart.
- iii. That workers would value to a greater extent, participative processes which are embedded in the culture of the organization thus forming a core of what the organization stands for.
- iv. That workers who partake in the decision-making process of the organization feel a sense of shared responsibility for the consequences of such decisions.
- v. That by engaging the workers through participative measures, the organization increases its perceived trustworthiness and workers would be ready to defend the organization in the face of criticism.
- vi. That through organizational culture, participation practices are effectively transferred and therefore form a basis for interpersonal relationships, policy making, communication and other human related activities within the organization

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